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"MAN BITES DOG" REPORTING

By WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

CHARLES DANA, famous editor of The *New York Sun,* offered a definition that has now become imbedded in the traditions of American journalism. "It isn't news when a dog bites a man," he said. "It is news when a man bites a dog."

No doubt this viewpoint has added snap and brilliance to American reporting. But it has not been helpful as a guide to the foreign correspondent, a part of whose job is to interpret realistically the country where he is stationed. For it puts a premium on searching out the bizarre, the unusual, the exceptional, rather than the typical.

And this "man bites dog" approach is especially unfortunate in dealing with an emotion-laden subject like postwar Germany. For the really big and important developments since the establishment of the Federal Republic five years ago are perhaps more interesting to the historian than to the newspaperman in search of a spectacular headline.

One such development is the almost miraculous economic recovery. This has transformed Munich and Hamburg and Frankfort and other cities of West Germany from shapeless masses of rubble after the war into impressive replicas of their former selves. The recovery has also brought wages of industrial workers above the pre-war level, has put more cars on the German roads than there were before the war, and has made the new German mark, which started from scratch in 1948, one of the hardest currencies of Europe. But it is stories of striking disaster, not of quiet, prosaic building that normally hit the front page.

The really significant German developments, in politics as in economics, have been of the quiet unspectacular type. There has been the steady, consistent development of Chancellor Adenauer's foreign policy, unwaveringly anti-Communist and consistently pro-Western, even after such a hard knock as the defeat of the EDC.

There has been the emergence of a political stability that matches the growing economic stability. As an instrument for the efficient conduct of domestic and foreign affairs, the Bundestag is a happy contrast to some other European parliaments, with big Communist fifth columns and weak and shifting coalitions based on multiple party systems.

What one finds in Bonn is a governing right-of-center coalition, conservative but not reactionary, and a Social Democratic opposition that is moderate, as Social Democratic parties go. There is not one Communist in the Bundestag and not one representative of parties or groups who could reasonably be described as neo-Nazi.

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What Adenauer has proposed and promised in foreign affairs — settlement of Germany's pre-war debts, a voluntary indemnity payment to Israel, German participation in the EDC (finally killed by France), and approval of the London agreement — he has invariably delivered. There has been nothing in Germany that suggests the French performance of first proposing, then stalling, sabotaging and finally repudiating the EDC.

THIS IS THE REAL story of Germany during the last few years: a people recovering political and economic balance, regaining self-respect and self-confidence, after the terrific shocks of Nazism, complete defeat in war and the first blundering and extravagantly punitive years of occupation. This recovery, often referred to in Europe as a miracle, has been under the leadership of two remarkable men.

Konrad Adenauer, a great German and a great European, has recognized that Germany's destiny lies in political, economic and military partnership with the West and has steered German foreign policy away from the pitfalls of neutralism. Ludwig Erhard, the chubby and enormously energetic Minister of Economics, has let loose to the full the German assets of technical skill, knowledge and capacity for hard work by the simple device of scrapping most of the economic controls which prevailed under Hitler and under the occupation and letting a free incentive economy show what it could do.

But this real German story, long on constructive achievement, is short on melodrama. What a temptation for the journalist in Germany who has been brought up on the "man bites dog" tradition to search eagerly for plots with the Kremlin, for neo-Nazis lurking in every government office and planning a sinister comeback, for signs that Adenauer is losing his grip on the political situation! The temptation is all the greater because lurid tales of a new Nazi peril appeal to wartime hates and prejudices which have not been fully outlived in the United States.

I had a striking personal experience, illustrating this trend, when I was in Bonn last summer. I had attended a meeting in honor of the men who perished in the anti-Hitler conspiracy of July 20, 1944. Principal speaker was the prominent Bundestag deputy Eugen Gerstenmeier, himself a participant in the plot. Chancellor Adenauer was present and endorsed in the strongest terms Gerstenmeier's plea to honor the memory of the martyrs of July 20 by pressing on toward the goal of a united Europe. "A false nationalism," said the Chancellor, "is something evil. Everyone who is called to work for the fatherland in any position must first of all be guided by the principles of right and justice and humanity."

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THIS WAS ONLY ONE of many meetings that were held at this time, extolling the resisters and denouncing the Nazi tyranny. But, on the very day when Adenauer and Gerstenmeier had spoken, a very cocksure and dogmatic British journalist, certain that he knew all the answers about Germany, tried unsuccessfully to convince me that the "Nazis are coming back and running the whole show."

It is true, and quite unavoidable, that some former members of the Nazi party are filling posts in the government, in the professions and in private industry. The Nazi regime was so totalitarian in character that it was extremely difficult to take any active part in public service or in some professions and occupations without at least joining some Nazi-controlled organization. To make pariahs out of a large number of people, of whom the majority were skin-deep conformists, would have been neither possible nor desirable. What is important is that the political and economic policies of the Federal Republic are about as far removed as would be conceivable from Nazi ideals of nationalist exclusiveness and domination, economic autarchy and rigid state control of business and foreign trade.

The authentic parallels with Nazi methods are to be found in the Soviet Zone of Germany, where many former Nazis and "militarists" have entered Soviet service (with how much sincerity is anyone's guess) and may be found in high military and administrative posts. But it is a familiar trick of Communist propaganda to accuse the other side of doing what the Communists are doing, or trying to do, themselves.

Norbert Muhlen, whose *The Return of Germany* (Regnery) is one of the all too few thoughtful, serious and well-informed books on Germany since the war, points out the systematic Communist exploitation of the neo-Nazi bogey:

"The hate-the-Germans propaganda was as efficient a secret weapon of the Communists in America as the hate-America propaganda has become an efficient secret weapon of the Communists in Germany and many other countries today. . . .

"Using as their spokesmen non-Communists (who have sometimes naively been misled by, and sometimes consciously been following the hidden Communists), the Soviet machine of shaping American public opinion has conjured up the neo-Nazi spectre so often, so loudly and with so much conviction that many people in America have begun to fear it is real."

I could verify this technique from my personal experience in Bonn. The British correspondent who was filling his mass circulation newspaper with lurid tales of "neo-Nazis taking over" the Bonn Government would have been outraged at the suggestion that he was a Communist sympathizer. He represented a popular newspaper of gen-

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erally conservative views whose owner is a well-known press lord who has been a persistent opponent of German rearmament.

BUT THE MAIN source of this journalist's information was Otto John, head of the Office for the Defense of the Constitution, who showed his true colors by fleeing to the Soviet Zone and emitting a series of broadcasts perfectly tailored to fit the Communist political line. John, a notorious drunkard and generally unstable character, so obsessed with a largely imaginary Nazi danger that he had no eyes for the Communist danger, was appointed to his office rather reluctantly by the Federal government under strong British pressure; he had fled to England during the war and worked with British secret service agencies and cooperated in the preparation of "war crimes" trials.

The flight to the Soviet Zone of John and of an extreme conservative member of the Bundestag named Schmidt-Wittmarck (a former Nazi, incidentally) touched off a new line of "man bites dog" reporting. A German refugee journalist published an article entitled "Why Germans Go East," and the John and Schmidt-Wittmarck defections received vastly more proportionate publicity than the infinitely larger number of defections in the opposite direction. An unsophisticated American might have gained the impression that the Soviet Zone was a magnet for the West Germans, not the other way around.

But here facts and figures speak for themselves. Since the end of the war almost two million Germans have fled from the Soviet Zone to the West. Movement in the other direction is a negligible trickle. As for prominent "defectors," the West has obtained, against John, Schmidt-Wittmarck and one provincial legislator, fifteen members of the Soviet Zone "parliament," five members of the Soviet puppet Cabinet, thirteen provincial legislators and at least thirty leading officials.

And here is where the deceptive quality of the "man bites dog" news formula comes in. If 300 people, on the average, flee from the Soviet Zone to West Berlin every day, this is routine and no one thinks it is worth a story. But a flight from the Federal Republic to the Soviet Zone is so rare that it qualifies under the "man bites dog" category.

The bizarre and the unusual have their place in attracting the casual newspaper reader. But journalists who are interpreting an important foreign country to the American public should feel some obligation to learn and point out what is typical and predominant, rather than the occasional cases when a man, figuratively speaking, goes berserk and bites a dog.

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HUMAN EVENTS

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Vol. XI, No. 46 Wednesday, November 17, 1954 Washington, D. C.

Fighting Front: Libertarians this week took the offensive against the totalitarian forces which devised the censure of Senator McCarthy.

General Stratemeyer (the air-commander who flattened Japan) came out as head of an organization entitled "Ten Million Americans" (Hotel Roosevelt, New York, N.Y.), which is designed to support the Wisconsin Senator and all he stands for, and called for millions of signed petitions demanding defeat of the censure resolution. With Stratemeyer in this endeavor are Admiral William A. Standley, former Chief of Naval Operations; General James A. Van Fleet; Lt. General Pedro del Valle, Commander of the Marines at Guadalcanal; and Admiral John Crommelin.

Those in the Capital who score the points in the daily struggle between Americans and pro-Communists credit this group with a well-calculated move. They say that this week's publicity offensive should have been mounted last spring, when the full force of centralized government was thrown at McCarthy with the cry, "he impugns the honor of the Army." This charge although untrue was effective, because the public did not realize that McCarthy was not attacking the generals, the fine flower of the regular army, but was seeking to prosecute the civilian bureaucrats of the Department of the Army, the chair-warmers who promoted Peress. The public was unaware that the Department of the Army was infiltrated with leftwingers whose maneuvers to cover up their protection of subversives led to the crisis of the whole McCarthy affair. (See HUMAN EVENTS, May 19, 1954).

Today, the forthright statement of these generals and admirals clears the air (however belatedly) and throws the pro-Communist elements on the defensive.

Secondly, in the past 48 hours, Senator Jenner of Indiana launched an eloquent attack on the censure resolution and demanded action to put an end to the use of the Senate by the pro-Communist strategists. His words, which brought applause from the galleries, put the whole censure affair in the correct perspective: "We cannot vote for or against the charges in the indictment, for the indictment is in error. The most important evidence on the question was not considered. That evidence is the all-important fact that Senator McCarthy was fighting a conspiracy. To bring in a censure resolution against a Senator, while ignoring a conspiracy against him, is like bringing in an indictment for murder against a private citizen, while ignoring the evidence that a goon squad had made nightly attempts to murder him and his wife and children . . . It [the Watkins Committee] comes close to asking the Senate to help the conspiracy to punish a public official who has defied it."

Then Jenner called for tabling the censure resolution and for going on the offensive against the conspiracy so as to uncover "conspiratorial influence on the Senate of the United States." Specifically, the Indiana Senator suggested that the Internal Security Subcommittee probe evidence of Communist attempts to influence Congress, in short to serve as an F.B.I. to safeguard the integrity of the legislative body.

California Sets the Pace: It's getting to be that people have to look to sages in the Sunset state for leadership in politics these days. Senator Knowland of California, top man of the GOP majority now meeting on Capitol Hill, rudely brought that body back to reality from the absurdity of the censure resolution yesterday by calling for a reconsideration of our whole foreign policy. Coming from the party chief in the upper house, this statement — we happen to know — spread deep unhappiness among the White House Palace Guard. The last thing they want is a long debate just now in the Senate over the mess created by the State Department which is still filled with Acheson holdovers. Californian Knowland has the "liberal" advisers worried as much as Californian Knight, whose big victory in the governorship race, has placed him in the forefront of the national political scene.

For Knight's commanding position stands in bright contrast to that of the Eisenhower "liberals" — of Ives, Dewey, Lodge, the "liberal" bosses of New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut who went down to defeat on November 2. Writers are beginning to wake up to the fact of this epochal defeat of the GOP New Dealers. After HUMAN EVENTS pointed out this development on November 3, Walter Leckrone, editor of the Scripps *Indianapolis Times,* followed suit, noting the "shift in balance of power within the Republican Party." Leckrone said: "The votes of their own bailiwicks all but completed the destruction of the power of the party wing led by Governor Dewey that dominated the 1952 con-

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vention. They obviously left intact, or if anything slightly strengthened, the bloc that was beaten in that convention." In short, the "Taft wing" emerged better than before, the "Dewey wing" utterly routed. Ray Tucker, veteran Washington columnist, also noted the "stunning reverses of the liberal Republican leaders . . . literally wiped off the map."

So, the truth is coming out, despite contrary efforts of the clique surrounding the President, and their friends in the press. This aggregation is mainly responsible for the fantastic "line" disseminated in the press — that the election was a defeat for GOP conservatives, a victory for the party "liberals" and a personal triumph for the President. In short, the press sycophants (who live on government publicity handouts and "leaks," which are given only to "cooperative" reporters) have created much of the confusion in the public mind about the election.

Not Merely Gossip: Real liberals (as distinct from the "totalitarian liberals") are planning to put French Premier Mendes-France on the spot when the latter arrives on his American visit (which, incidentally, was not encouraged by Dulles). This arch-appeaser of Soviet Russia, it is alleged, has permitted a real nationwide reign of terror against anti-Communists in France. Many are fleeing to Switzerland for refuge.

● General A. C. Wedemeyer is around Washington these days. It is reported that he is engaged on an important assignment from the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy. His job is to survey and report on the military concept of "Fortress America," hemisphere defense — by air power and guided missiles — of the "American Island" against a world fast coming under the hegemony of Soviet Russia. His findings may prove as sensational as his famous "Wedemeyer Report" on China and Korea in 1947-8, which the Truman Administration smothered, with such disastrous results.

● In the judgment of intelligence sources, the shooting down of the U.S. B-29 off Japan was a stroke of Communist psychological warfare: it was deliberately timed and staged to coincide with the visit of Japanese Premier Yoshida to the United States. The Russians were seeking to terrorize the Japanese and to give the impression that the U.S. cannot help Japan to defend itself against Soviet military power.

● The stay-at-home vote, as noted by the *New York Post* (a vigorous opponent of McCarthy), on November 3: "In the strongly pro-McCarthy districts of Queens and Brooklyn there was a sizable number of stay-at-homes. Based on 1950 figures, only 70 per cent of the voters in these districts registered, compared to a 90 per cent turnout in the liberal districts of the city. Had the pro-Joe contingent been eligible to vote, they would undoubtedly have swung the state to the Republicans."

Dixon-Yates: Although the Dixon-Yates contract has been fully signed by the Atomic Energy Commission, the supporters of TVA are confident they can yet defeat it. Three lines of attack are already being developed:

(1) Persuade Congress not to appropriate the money for the AEC to pay for the Dixon-Yates power.

(2) The Dixon-Yates groups will have to offer securities to banks and insurance companies to get the more than one hundred million dollars necessary to construct their plant. These securities must first be approved by the Securities-Exchange Commission and the contract provides that if SEC does not approve their issuance the Dixon-Yates groups may then withdraw from the contract. The plan, therefore, is to find a way to drag out SEC hearings to a point where Dixon and Yates and their backers will be goaded into withdrawing from the contract. If that happens, the deal will die an administrative death.

(3) Make use of the "recapture clause" inserted in the contract almost at the last minute. Mounting pressure from "liberal" groups altered the contract considerably before it was signed. Out of six important changes, five were intended to appease TVA supporters. The most crucial of these was the "recapture clause," permitting the government to take over the private plant — lock, stock and barrel — at anytime within the next three years.

In short, Dixon and Yates are given the uncertain privilege of constructing their plant at a low cost advantageous to the government. The private power industry curbs wasteful construction by imposing rigid price ceilings on all construction estimates. On estimates for government-built power plants — by contrast — there are no ceilings, with the result that final costs often are shockingly above original construction estimates. Thus Dixon and Yates are invited to construct their plant as economically as possible while the government reserves the right to take it away from them at any time within the next three years.

"The recapure clause" in effect, hangs over the heads of Dixon and Yates like a Damoclean sword, may descend and rob these private interests of the fruits of their free enterprise efforts.

The avalanche of orders by wire, telephone and letter for the November 10th Article "The McCarthy Record" by Willard Edwards suggests that all records for HUMAN EVENTS reprints may be broken. Copies cost 6 for $1; 10 for $1.50; 50 for $5.50; 100 for $10; 500 for $15; 1000 for $25. Quotations for larger quantities on request.

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A Program For Conservatives, by Russell Kirk. Henry Regnery Co., Chicago. $4.00. Reviewed by Garet Garrett.

There are signs of an intellectual vacuum in the world, created in this curious way — that while ideology was beginning to lose faith in its own answers the enemy was nodding and therefore ill prepared to make a counter-attack. The enemy of course — the natural enemy of all ideology is the conservative, who had almost forgotten his own creed.

This may be illustrated by something that happened at Yale Law School. Some third year students organized themselves as the Conservative Society of Yale Law School, and were then, in their own words, "disturbed over the ignorance of conservative principles displayed even by those sympathetic to conservatism." Evidently their own University was not too sympathetic, for when they moved for a series of lectures on "The Role of the Conservative in Today's World," they had to go outside for their first speaker. He was Professor Russell Kirk, who from asking himself the same question — what is a conservative? had just written a book about it, entitled *A Program for Conservatives,* (Henry Regnery Company, Chicago).

Dr. Kirk says: "Where ideology seizes upon a nation's consciousness, the influence of true conservatism declines; and where the power of ideology declines, there conservatism has opportunity for appealing anew to men's minds; and appeal to them it must. . . . I think that our country, like most of western Europe, is drifting away from ideology and that only an elevated conservatism can avert that bored indifference to past and future, and that destructive contempt for all moral values, which work the ruin of order."

Conservatism is the negation of all ideology. Why?

Because whether they be Communist, Fabian Socialist or American Liberal, all ideologues begin by assuming that existence is a rational business; that by abstract reason the planners can perfect human society if only they have the power to make people obey their rules.

In this scheme, says Dr. Kirk, "there is no room left for Providence, or chance or free will or prudence." The conservative, on the other hand, believes the individual is foolish although the species is wise." And if you are going to invoke the wisdom of the species you have to venerate Chesterton's "democracy of the dead" — that is to say, the considered judgment of the wise men who died before our time. The ideologue has neither ancestors nor history. The conservative is bound by history in order to establish the continuity of past, present and future. The ideologue is a leveller. The conservative believes in an aristocracy of mind and spirit.

If you think a conservative is a tycoon or capitalist you may be very wrong, according to Dr. Kirk. He etches three true conservatives. One of them is a truck driver. A capitalist may be a radical. But whatever he is, or thinks he is, he is bound to worship efficiency and success; and what an intellectual conservative would say to that may astonish him.

"If," says Kirk, "the worship of efficiency were an all-American value, then we should be a doomed people, for an exclusive devotion to material improvement, to the utter neglect of moral principle and 'the unbought grace of life,' is the swiftest way to catastrophe. The cult of efficiency is a Suicide Club because it despises the dignity of human personality and therefore provokes the reaction of human beings, whose deepest instinct tells them they are not meant to be machines."

From this passage one may guess what Dr. Kirk's intellectual conservative thinks of mass production, mass education and the statistical ecstasy of a rising standard of living. He says: "It might have been well enough fifty years ago to exhort the public to free competition and the profit motive and the grandeur of the self-made man. But it will not do today when men must have principles by which to live and die. American conservatives ought to talk a great deal less about the laws of economics and a great deal more about the laws of justice."

Dr. Kirk's true conservative is a mystic, finally. He says: "Our time, sick nigh unto death of utilitarianism and literalness, cries out for myth and fable. Great myths are not merely susceptible of rational interpretation; they *are* truth, transcendent truth." A kind of truth not to be arrived at by any statistical method.

There is probably nowhere a chamber of commerce that could recognize Dr. Kirk's true conservative. If that is a fact, does it disparage Dr. Kirk or does it explain why the chamber of commerce mentality, never having been able to advance conservatism to the gallantry of a fighting faith, now itself is corrupted by the slogans of ideology?

When you have read Dr. Kirk's book you may know why you are a conservative, if you are; it will make you wiser but no happier.

We are wiser, but not happy, as we put the above posthumous piece into print. For, after sending us the manuscript, Garet Garrett died on November 6. To the greatest of our conservative writers, who charmed us by his literary skill and profoundly influenced us by his wisdom — *Ave Atque Vale.*

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